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INFO ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE
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RUEHMS/AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

UNCLAS MUSCAT 000623

SIPDIS
STATE FOR NEA/ARP
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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [OIIP](#) [KPAO](#) [KMDR](#) [MU](#)
SUBJECT: OMAN MEDIA REACTION

¶1. SUMMARY: In anticipation of the release of the Trafficking in Persons report, commentary on June 10 in private daily "Al Watan" called labor relations in the Sultanate "balanced". The article raised last year's TIP report, blaming "political gains" as the U.S.'s motivation for the low-ranking. On June 13, "Al Watan" ran a commentary by a Ministry of Manpower employee urging the private sector to adhere to the Omani Labor law and anti-Trafficking law. On June 15, "Al Watan" called Prime Minister Netanyahu's speech a "slap in the face" to the Arab world and international community. END SUMMARY.

"VINDICATING FALSE REPORTS"

¶2. Anticipating the global release of the Trafficking in Persons report, private daily "Al Watan" (circulation 42,000) on June 10 commented that labor relations in Oman are "balanced", recalling that "influential countries" had previously exaggerated trafficking problem for political gain. According to "Cooperation and Fundamental Rights in the Workplace":

"Despite the presence of millions of expatriate workers in the region, labor relations have always been balanced. Rights are protected by rules and regulations. Some influential countries have tried to exaggerate problems faced by foreign workers for political ends and to exert pressure. Following clarifications and the vindication of false reports, those countries have revoked their positions and returned to 'rationality.' It would be better if international organizations such as the ILO would carry out the monitoring assignments of such issues to fairly explore the extent of cooperation."

"PRIVATE SECTOR ESTABLISHMENTS MUST COMPLY"

¶3. On June 13, "Al Watan" carried a commentary by a Ministry of Manpower employee and professor on the Ministry's efforts to combat trafficking. The article builds a case for the Ministry's contribution to fighting TIP, referring to its awareness campaign and calling for private sector compliance. According to "The Work Environment and Workers' Rights":

"On November 24, 2008, His Majesty issued the anti-Trafficking in Persons Law which addresses all forms of worker exploitation, Omani and non-Omani. The Ministry of Manpower has publicized in an ongoing campaign requirements for appropriate working conditions, as well as health and safety regulations. Private sector establishments must comply with the anti-Trafficking Law and the Ministry of Manpower's

instructions regarding proper working conditions stipulated in the Omani Labor Law."

"A HARSH RESPONSE, A SLAP IN THE FACE"

¶4. On June 15, "Al Watan" commented that Prime Minister Netanyahu's speech in response to President Obama's two-state initiative was a "fantasy" and a "slap in the face". According to "The Speech... A Slap":

"Netanyahu promised nothing in his speech regarding peace while asking for everything from the world and Arabs. His speech listed many difficult conditions that make the establishment of the Palestinian state impossible. What he introduced in his speech violated all international laws and understandings relevant to previous resolutions. It was also contrary to Obama's demands to accept the two-state solution. Netanyahu's speech is a fantasy. It is a harsh response, a slap in the face."

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